

SOVIET INSURGENTS VOTED INTO POWER IN THE 3 MAIN CITIES

BLOW TO THE PARTY

Nationalist Groups Gain in Estonia and Latvia and in the Ukraine

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, March 19 — The emerging political opposition scored a series of triumphs across the Soviet Union in election results released today, winning majorities over the Communists in the Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev City Councils and electing significant numbers of insurgents in republic Parliaments.

Early results from the latest local and republic elections showed that the fledgling opposition movement received a large-scale vote of confidence on Sunday from Soviet voters intent on registering their displeasure with seven decades of Communist Party domination in their communities.

Nationalist opposition movements continued to make progress in Estonia and Latvia, where separatist candidates did well, and in the Ukraine. There, the Rukh grass-roots political movement scored majority victories in Lvov and in Kiev — the Ukrainian capital and third-largest Soviet city — and claimed a sizable bloc in the republic's next Parliament.

Tests of Strength Planned

Insurgents are planning early tests of their newly won power in light of the results, in which the Communist Party suffered the embarrassment of losing majorities in the country's three main cities.

In Moscow, Interfax, a press agency of Radio Moscow, said insurgents won 281 of the 498 seats in the City Council. Opposition leaders in the capital plan to pass laws that would take control of local television and one of the city's newspapers from the long-entrenched Communist patronage machine.

The outcome of such challenges is far from certain, but leaders of the opposition say a grass-roots stratagem must be pursued issue by issue and job by job if the Communist monopoly on power is ever to be truly broken.

Building Power Bases

Ilya I. Zaslavsky, a leading strategist in the insurgents' Moscow victory, appears ready for that challenge in turning the 498-member City Council into an instrument for change. Among the initial issues he and other leaders of the grass-roots opposition plan to settle are whom the new majority might try to name as the city's mayor. No candi-

Continued on Page A13, Column 1

SOVIET INSURGENTS WIN IN KEY CITIES

Continued From Page A1

dates were immediately mentioned as Moscow dissidents celebrated their victory.

The Soviet Parliament has repealed the constitutional requirement that the Communist Party have a monopoly role, leaving the opposition the formidable task of defining itself and building power bases in a country whose campaign finances and news media remain largely party-controlled.

The voting on Sunday was for thousands of local and republic posts in the Russian republic, the Ukraine and Byelorussia, three republics where runoff votes were needed, and in Latvia and Estonia, where the first round of local elections was held.

Among the most closely watched opposition tactics was the one pursued by Boris N. Yeltsin, the onetime Politburo ally of President Mikhail S. Gorbachev who survived a party purge to become one of the country's best known insurgent leaders.

Mr. Yeltsin, pursuing his own grass-roots opposition strategy, won a seat two weeks ago in the Russian republic's Parliament, preparatory to trying to win majority endorsement in the new Parliament as President of the republic, a prime showcase in which to further develop his anti-Gorbachev image.

Democracy and Free Markets

Election results gave no firm indication of the parliamentary voting in the Russian republic that would show Mr. Yeltsin's chances, although insurgent candidates were reportedly doing well.

Voting results are not centrally tabulated, and the early reports that were reported by several different sources today were sketchy on details. But local officials celebrated many victories, particularly the symbolic ones in which, for example, a former political prisoner, Viktor Bulgakov, defeated Yuri Gorbachev, a local K.G.B. official unrelated to the Soviet President.

The opposition movements are fragmented in their identities, depending on local issues, but in general they favor pluralistic politics, free-market economic innovations and stronger and more rapid democratization.

The successful challengers include a sizable number of insurgents who themselves are party members dedi-

The opposition will take on patronage machines next.

cated either to getting the Communist Party to take a more pluralistic course at the next party congress, in July, or leading its reformist wing in a break-away movement to form the nucleus of a formal opposition party. Dissident leaders generally expect that the country will prove too unwieldy to have merely a single opposition party and so will eventually have three or four.

Long-entrenched Communists suffered some of their most stinging defeats in Leningrad, the nation's second city. Dissidents there grouped under the insurgent opposition umbrella

called Democratic Elections '90 took 54 percent of the City Council seats and 80 percent of the city's seats in the republic Parliament, according to various reports, including one from the official Tass press agency.

The mayor of Leningrad, Vladimir Y. Khodyrev, survived on the City Council only by arranging to run in a weakly contested outlying neighborhood.

Insurgents' Victory in Minsk

In Byelorussia, insurgents directly defeated key party leaders in council races in Minsk, the republic's capital, the Government newspaper Izvestia reported.

In Kiev, candidates backed by the nationalist Rukh took control of the City Council with more than half the seats, and made strong gains in the Ukrainian Parliament, Reuters reported, adding that the Ukrainian Communist Party leader, Vladimir A. Ivashko, was elected to Parliament.

Opposition leaders were concerned

that Soviet voters, their weariness obviously growing from a yearlong deluge of more open political debate and endless promises of national renewal, might not turn out on Sunday in numbers to meet the requirement that there be more than a 50 percent turnout for the results to count.

In most cases, this proved wrong, although in Ulyanovsk, where Lenin was born, only 45 percent of the voters turned out, necessitating another runoff. In Moscow, the turnout averaged 60 percent.

The final results will not be known for some time, but the tide clearly is running against the Communist establishment. The mood registered by the voters will be underlined by insurgent leaders as they move on to their next arena, the July congress of the party leadership. Dissidents contend that the congress will be the party's last chance to salvage any respect from the public by radically reforming its rules and leadership.